

LETTER TO 118TH CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 18, 2023

Honorable Elected Congressmen/women and Senators:

Congratulations on making it to the Washington Congress representing your state and hope you are enjoying the Spring season.

Recently I met with your aids covering Public Lands issues to give information concerning our country's beautiful and valuable wild horses and burros and why I am very concerned about what is happening to them and how they are being denied their legal rights to live at truly healthy population levels in corresponding viable, year-round habitats.

As a wildlife ecologist during my career, I have made the wild horses and burros, along with others of their Order, a chief focus. What has stood out particularly is that these horses and burros are ancient and long-standing, as well as beneficial, members of the North American life community. Being different from the cloven-hoofed, ruminant herbivores, which they balance out, they are real gardeners of the natural world who more greatly build healthy soils, seed a diversity of plants, including many natives, and, due to their blunter, more rounded hooves as well as upper and lower incisors, do not impact the soils and vegetation as severely. In fact, objective scientific studies have shown that they actually restore and enhance many ecosystems as *keystone species*, including, of course, right here in North America, their evolutionary cradle.

These very beneficial animals, who are "national heritage species" as well as "returned North American natives", are, unfortunately being treated abominably and very much contrary to the true spirit and intent of the unanimously passed Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Public Law 92-195, 16 U.S.C. 1331-1340, abbrev. WFHBA), as well as a number of other Acts when appreciated for their true intents and purposes.

One of the most disturbing aspects of current BLM-USDI and USFS-USDA policies (the two agencies charged with wild equid protection and conservation) concerns the enormous amount of filtered and skewed information that is put out by public lands resource exploiters who deviously distort the truth and narrow the perspective, or overview, in order to cast blame upon, or "scapegoat" the wild, naturally living horse and burros. These are people who realize enormous, overly subsidized profits on our – the peoples' – public lands, yet who, instead of being grateful for this and showing respect for the wild horses and burros in their relatively minor legal habitats on BLM and USFS lands, rather have become insufferably selfish in refusing to share the land and freedom with these wonderful and inspiring animals! These people really need to be checked in the name of the public good as well as in the name of defending the precious life community on Earth.

I am including some fair and objective assessments of the current wild horse and burro survival crisis in America. Though legally protected, these innocent animals are being viciously attacked, not only by their traditional enemies against whom the WFHBA was meant to defend them, but by the very agencies that were and remain presently mandated to defend them in their legal habitats, meaning to defend their free and natural lifestyle and the realization of their truer nature, as opposed to the derogatory "feral" domestic escapee label their detractors like to put on them. While analyzing the accompanying information, I urge you to carefully consider the Relative Proportions between the grazing pressure of

livestock and that of the wild equids. Also consider the relative proportions of the impacts of public lands mining and energy development as well as vehicles and other factors in relation to the wild equids and their effects. This more all-inclusive view of what is happening upon our public lands truly unmask the prejudiced claims against the wild horses and burros for what they actually are: a form of egotistic put-down and negativity aimed at the horses and burros and their true place in nature. This perversity mustn't carry the day, but needs to be dispelled by greater truth and justice.

What can be done to correct this terribly unjust situation? How can we restore the wild horses and burros, along with, as well as in, their rightful legal habitats throughout the West and at truly long-term-viable, thriving, un-biologically altered and harmoniously adapted populations.

As a professional wildlife ecologist and conservationist who takes his duty to the whole of Nature seriously, I propose the *Restore Our American Mustangs and Burros Reserve Design and Rewilding Act*, or ROAM-RD for short. This approach derives from Conservation Biology and would adhere and be consistent with the true spirit and intent of the WFHBA. It would achieve the following urgent reforms:

(1) Restore the wild horses and wild burros to their rightful legal Herd Areas on BLM and Territories on US Forest Service lands wherever possible.

(2) Establish complete, year-round and long-term-viable habitats for each particular mustang and burro herd with all the various requirements for truly viable population sizes, adequate forage, water, shelter, minerals, seasonal habitats, etc.

(3) Reform the Appropriate Management Level (AML) population designations for all the original wild equid herds and along with this the Animal Unit Months (AUM) forage allocations in order to provide adequate sustenance during all seasons of the year that would insure the crucially resilient survival of each herd.

(4) Cut back on livestock grazing permits and other public lands exploiting permits such as mining and energy development within the legal habitats of the wild horses and burros as the WFHBA mandates as well as 43 C.F.R. 4710.5 & .6 and other related laws authorize. This would restore the true and core intent of the WFHBA that mandates these legal equid habitats be "principally devoted to the welfare and benefit" of the wild horses and burros themselves, not public lands ranchers and every other public land exploiting interest before them – as is currently the case! This is right in Section 2 c of the WFHBA, just as "minimum feasible level" management is in Section 3 a. (See Introduction section of my book [The Wild Horse Conspiracy](#) for points of law.)

(5) Instead of disrespectful, invasive alterations of the wild horses and burros biological constitutions, such as certain part-time or permanent sterilizing drugs such as Gona Con and PZP, and instead of the cruel and even sadistic surgical sterilizations, such as ovariectomies and castrations, allow the wild horse and burro populations to self-stabilize their numbers once having filled their respective ecological niches within their variously bounded natural habitats. Although this equid capacity is often overlooked, these horses and burros are long-standing and harmonious members of Earth's life community that are capable of self-limitation once they have filled their respective ecological niches. Additionally, the restoration of natural predators can and does play an important role in achieving this self-stabilization, but it is by no means the only means or even necessarily the primary means thereof. It is very important for people to allow the benign establishment of mature social units, often called bands among the horses, and harems among the more territorial burros. These can and do limit reproduction by sub-mature horses and burros. This occurs because the older males and females repress reproduction by the younger males and females, both behaviorally and in other ways. This natural population stabilization

has been going on for ages, yet it is precisely what the thoughtless and draconian helicopter roundups destroy, as do other herd reduction methods. This is counter-productive to achieving harmony and balance within wild-horse/burro-containing ecosystems.

(6) Set up Cooperative Agreements by using authorities under Section 4 and 6 of the WFHBA in order to achieve the true and noble purposes of the WFHBA. This will undo so much of the mischievous subterfuge that has taken away the wild horses' and burros' legal habitats – often totally! These are on lands that should have been occupied by the wild horses and burros today, and beneficially so! Section 4 and 6 would allow our public servants to solidify positive contracts that support rather than take away the wild equid's rightful land and freedom. This can work greatly to combat Global Warming and mitigate against or even prevent catastrophic wildfires.

(7) Reserve Design and Rewilding also involve the establishment of reserve habitat boundaries and the identification of those natural barriers that exist in any given area. These would greatly facilitate any necessary containment of any given herd, preventing the horse and burro from coming into harm's way in agricultural, industrial and urban areas. Where necessary, artificial, semi-permeable barriers, such as the very effective long-&-pole buck-rail type fences could be employed. These would be particularly doable around forested areas that could provide the appropriate logs and poles. Also, the establishment of buffer zones is very important to achieve an attenuation of equid presence around the margins of the reserve (see my Reserve Design proposal <https://www.gofundme.com/mstngreservedesign>)

(8) Positive educational programs would undo the negatively-premised years of disinformation and sinister plotting that have been trying to destroy the wild horses and burros, take over their habitats completely and totally subvert the true and noble spirit of the WFHBA. For many years this has been going on! Particularly important is the positive involvement of human communities that surround the wild horse and wild burro herds. These communities can be “brought on board” with a positive approach to learning to live in harmony with the wild, naturally living horses and burros and the fascinating and enhanced wild-equid-containing ecosystems. The horses and burros contribute very positively to these as deeply rooted North American Natives. Believe me! If our public officials had taken this approach from the beginning of the WFHBA, we would now see a much more pleasant, healthy world than today!

Conclusion:

Given the dire situation of America's wild horses and burros, bold and caring action is required now to avert a total tragedy. First, we must not be intimidated by what appear insurmountable obstacles. Let us affirm: these can be overcome. Where there is a will born of a higher vision and belief for a better tomorrow ... this inevitable sense of what is right for ALL of us, including the horses and burros, there shall open up a way forth. We mustn't lose our faith, mustn't lose sight of the vision of this superior way of life “when man and horse *in Freedom live* / once again with *mutual Respect*”. (From my “Poem to Wild Horses” in my book Wonder Streams of the Soul, p. 20, and delivered during my presentation on 4-25-2023 at the Save Our Wild Horses conference in Washington, DC.)

To conclude, I present to Americans the *Restore Our Wild Horses and Burros through Reserve Design and Rewilding Act*, ROAM-RD for short. This proposed plan is described in detail in accompanying documents. I would greatly appreciate your careful consideration of my professional proposal and, if you agree, I would likewise appreciate your help in formalizing this urgently needed reform as an introduced bill. If we promote it with true heart, clear vision and resolute persistence, we can make this urgent change in our society happen. The world needs this today! Rather than the present misnamed “path forward” subscribed by BLM, this will be the true road into a much more enlightened and balanced

future for America's magnificent wild and free-living horses and burros, for us humans, and for all the Great Rest of Life!

In keen expectation of your response, I am
Sincerely and Respectfully,

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Enclosures

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